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THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS,

AN ESSAY.

PART FIRST OF THE GOSPEL OF FREEDOM.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

AN ESSAY

BY

MOWRY SABEN

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Mowry Sabin.
Mar. 3. 1904

Even the Rock of Ages melts
Into the mineral air,
To be the quarry whence to build
Thought and its mansions fair.

Emerson.

To lovers of absolute freedom, the wide world over, I dedicate this little book.

PREFACE.

THIS little book consists of an essay read in Mercantile Library Hall, Philadelphia, on the evening of Dec. 18, 1900, and is now printed as an introduction to a larger book to be called *The Gospel of Freedom.*

This essay is the work of a radical, who believes more in openness of mind and freedom of thought and speech than in anything else. My hair is not yet white, and in the natural course of things ought not to be for many years, but I have lived long enough to know that a large part—I sometimes think the larger part—of our expressed thought is little more than sham and pretense. We live one thing and we speak another. Even our life is more or less a thing of sham, too, based as it is on fear and make believe, with no attempt to get at the underlying reality of things.

We are full to the brim of false religions and narrow moralities, our social systems are largely founded upon conventional lies, and the thought process of the majority resembles nothing so much as the terrific labor of the mountain which finally gave birth to a mouse.

I am no mere iconoclast. I have no love of destruction for the sake of destruction. But I would clear the inner wells of consciousness, and the cities in which men labor, and sweat and swagger, of the foul and worthless rubbish, which the tyranny of foolish years and foolish men has scattered so promiscuously through the ages. I would fain see life fair, sweet and wholesome. And I know

that the life of Man can never be a blessing, unalloyed with a curse, until men—in the last analysis, all men—are free inwardly and outwardly.

Unlike some whose cry for liberty is louder than it is deep, I do not expect to see the passing of religion and the higher aspirations of earth as a consequence of freedom. Rather do I look forward with an almost impatient eagerness to that nobler religion and those higher aspirations which are destined to come when we shall have attained unto absolute freedom. Man is not to become something less but something more. Ideals are not to pass away; ethical considerations shall be ever with us. We shall grow, but, no matter whither growth may take us, we shall always be able to say, even as we say now:

> "All the good the past hath had
> Remains to make our own time glad."

Let us then be free. Remove all shackles from the mind and body that we may see at last what the ages have dreamed of so long—a Man. Let us rise above all this prejudice and stupid convention, which might seem respectable if it had come from a conclave of apes, but so unworthy of free sons of God. Let us be free that we may prove to sincere materialists and honest doubt that we are something more than a mysterious handful of the world's dust. Let us be free that we may cease to be sorry spectacles which make the judicious grieve. Let us be free!

Mowry Saben.

New Bedford, August 15, 1903.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS.

DECEMBER 18, 1900.

INDIVIDUALS and nations die, but they leave the records of an imperishable soul behind. For this reason, it is profitable to cast a backward glance once in a while to exhume the record, and see what bearing it has upon the status of our present thought and achievement. And I know of few fields more profitable for the exploration of the student than the mythologies of the Pagan world. We have long outgrown the belief in the gods and goddesses who meant so much to our ancestors, and we have a fairly large body of mythology of our own devising which those who come after us will relegate to some limbo for superstitious fancies, but even in our superstitions there are great elements of truth, which the future will separate from

the grosser body of falsehood to which they now adhere. All things are beautiful, when we get over the superstition which is attached to them. Sunday becomes a very beautiful day when we no longer regard God as a kind of eavesdropper spying on us to see how we employ it. The Bible becomes a beautiful book when we are able to look upon it as literature, and the record of a nation's soul for a thousand years or more, and not the infallible revelation of a jealous God who will damn to eternity the man or woman who disbelieves some little story which happens to be found there. So I invite you to-night to consider with me an old legend of the Norse mythology which I believe has some meaning even for our time. It will be all the more interesting for us when we remember that it was a belief of the ancestors of some of us here to-night. There is, I think, not a little in these old legends to justify Barry Cornwall's lines:

> "O ye delicious fables! where the wave
> And the woods were peopled and the air with things
> So lovely! why, ah! why has science grave
> Scattered afar your sweet imaginings?"

And our own Longfellow has sung of that "ideal world whose language is not speech but song:" and of one living in it around whom

"evermore the throng
Of elves and sprites their dances whirled:
The Stromkarl sang, the cataract hurled
Its headlong waters from the height,
And mingled in the wild delight
The scream of sea birds in their flight:
The rumor of the forest trees,
The plunge of the implacable seas,
The tumult of the wind at night:
Voices of eld, like trumpets blowing
Old ballads and wild melodies
Through mist and darkness pouring forth
Like Elivagars rivers flowing
Out of the glaciers of the North.
And when he played, the atmosphere
Was filled with music, and the ear
Caught echo of that harp of gold
Whose music had so sweet a sound,
The hunted stag forgot to bound,
The leaping rivulet backward rolled,
The bird came down from bush and tree,
The dead came from beneath the tree,
The maiden to the harper's knee."

There are numerous similarities between the Greek and Norse mythologies, but the differences are equally pronounced, and these differences are due to the difference in character between the two peoples. The Greek mythology, as some one has finely said, is an epic poem, the Norse a tragedy. The Greek appeals more to our sense of beauty, the Norse appeals more to the facts of existence as we see them in every day life. While the Greek humanized Nature, and made it pleasing to the aesthetic sense, the Norseman with all his deep longing for rest and peace saw in Nature little but strife and warfare. He was in one respect at least a Darwinian before Darwin. Standing in the midst of his sublime and rugged scenery, observing the storms bending the pines on the mountains, and the waves tossed in gigantic fury against the rocky cliffs, listening to the moaning winds, the roaring waters, the growl of bear, and the howl of wolf, seeing light contending with darkness, and man with the earth, he formed no rosewater philosophy, but he gained some remarkable glimpses of truth. But the one feature of

the Norse mythology which I desire to call your attention to—a feature where it diverges radically from the Greek mythology—is its theoktony. The Greeks believed that their gods though born in time were immortal, but the Norse believed the time would come when their gods would perish like man himself. They believed that the gods were sprung from giants, and their nature being compounded of evil as well as good, as must necessarily follow from the somewhat chaotic nature of their origin, they could not be the possessors of immortal life. Within the gods even—so they reasoned—were the seeds of death. When Loke separated himself from the other gods, in the discord which caused the separation, the doom of the gods was inevitable. They would have been invincible had they not made themselves weak, but this they did through the course of their actions from time to time. To win the charming Gerd, Frey had to give away his sword, to chain the Fenris wolf, Tyr had to risk his right hand, and he lost it. The forces of good and evil ever contended, and finally they came to an

open combat which resulted in the destruction of the contending forces on both sides. I shall not attempt to give a description of the terrible battle which occurred on the field of Vigrid. You can find it described in any work on Norse mythology. But I desire to see what application we can make of this story to our own lives and time, believing that within this old story of Ragnarok, or the twilight of the gods, we may find some very profound lessons. The great battle went on until both the gods and the powers of evil were all killed, after which came the regeneration of the world. I say the powers of good were destroyed as well as the evil, but he will lose the point of the legend who does not perceive that the gods were good only in the sense of being higher and nobler than the forces they were contending against. None of the contending powers possessed any absolute good. Both were imperfect, and in that imperfection, as in all imperfection, lay the seeds of death.

Our gods are just as imperfect as were the gods of the Norse whom you call heathen.

And because they are imperfect, they must die some day. Some of them are dying around us every day, and all that endure till the end shall finally perish upon some Vigrid field of the Soul. None shall be saved, not one. We need not weep over their loss. They will not die until the time of their usefulness is over. And it is more than likely that some of them will persist in surviving far into their second childhood, and hang like a millstone around our necks before we shake ourselves free from their encumbrance.

Every man has moments when he deems himself perfect. "There is no flaw in me now," his words and actions seem to say. But to-morrow or next week he has lost his identity. His friends are unable to account for him. They think that there must be some mistake. They think that their friend must have died, and that some new spirit must have secured the old body. Sometimes they deem the new spirit an improvement, and sometimes the reverse. But even the new spirit does not remain long, and in a few years the friend is lost beyond all hope of rec-

ognition, though he retains the same name, and continues to frequent the old office, and retains the old, familiar pew in the church. One day he dies, and the minister is puzzled to know whose funeral service he is conducting. In a few days a monument in the cemetery tells of the virtues that everybody had forgotten, and the village worthies rub their eyes, and wonder how long they have been asleep, and when they woke up. Poor souls they are not awake yet, and I fear that some of them will never awake while we are here to see them. Some of them are so old that should they awake we would deem it a miracle, and so would they. There is no stability either in the world of man or of matter. Everything is in a condition of flux as Heraclitus said. We know not what a night may bring forth. Everything at times indicates a topsy-turvy condition of affairs. The man whom we thought so good has just committed an offence against the laws, and he who has been the terror of the community time out of mind has just got religion, and is going to join the church next Sunday. Before we know it our

liberal friend has grown old, and is hailed by the conservative faction as a recruit to their ranks, while here rumor reports that the ice fortress of some one whom we had supposed was chained as securely to conservatism as Prometheus to his rock is melting. Things seem to confute the books. We lose faith in knowledge. We wonder if there be any veracity in things, and whether insincerity be not quite as good a thing as sincerity. "What will happen next?" men are asking. Is man a phantom? Did anybody ever suggest that he is a god? Some wiseacre mutters something about "the old, old story," and some one who went to sleep over his pipe suddenly awakes, and wants to know what the story is about. He might as well have remained asleep. There is no more life in the story than in the dead ashes of his pipe. Here and there a youth lies awake at night craving for reality. But when he secures it, if he ever does, he is apt to cry like old Tithonous, "O gods take back thy gift: 'tis too horrible!" Some one says that life is a comedy, and he makes the welkin ring with his laughter,

then his sky is darkened with an inky cloud, the laughter dies away on his lips, and the smile never throws its light on his face again. He does not need to see Hamlet or Lear. They dwell within his heart forevermore.

The darkness deepens. A few years ago we were all singing the praises of a young author. How handsome! how charming! how clever! And lo! While the plaudits were still ringing, like a thunderbolt from a clear sky, the god of respectability spoke, commanding us to blot out his unspeakable name forever, yet hardly had the echoes of the voice died away before we heard that the man had passed from our midst—a son of the mother church. What does this life mean? Has it any meaning? One generation cometh and another generation goeth. They discuss the same subjects, and one generation decides the problems one way, and the next generation decides them another way, but they all get decided in one way or another. "Yes, but which way is right?" some one queries, perhaps adding afterwards, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death of

uncertainty?' I know not. The Fenris wolf swallowed the sun, and the Moongarm the moon, and the Midgard Serpent of the sea the land in that dreadful day of the Norse legend. Yet, before the day was over, they were all slain. "Yes," you reply, "but the gods were all slain likewise." That is very true, but the gods were slain because they were imperfect too. Had they not been, they would have survived. Odin and Thor were gods of might, but they had not enough truth to make them invincible.

Does not the great light of this legend begin to pierce through the darkness of our minds? Is not the lesson which it teaches becoming plain? Is it not evident that the reason for our uncertainties and defeats lies in the imperfection of ourselves? Your truth may be higher than your neighbor's error, but your truth is an error, too. You contend against your brother's darkness, but your light is darkness as well. One cannot see to walk very far in it, so we stumble and fall. Rejoice that you are able to walk at all. "But is there no such thing as truth?"

I hear you ask. I doubt not, good brother, that Truth exists, but no man can see Truth and live. We must live by faith, not sight. The universe is the expression of a mighty thought, and you and I are the partial expressions of that thought. We spend our lives in trying to express the inexpressible. We must do this, for we are impelled to do so by a force—may I not say the God within us—over which we have no control. Do not fear then when you discover the imperfection of your thought. You are on the way to larger gains. The old Norse gods went bravely to their death, knowing well that they were doomed to die. They knew that they were not true gods. Why then, should you regard yourself as a true god? If you fight like a true god and fall, there may be hope of your resurrection in some purer form. But if you stand still in your tracks and merely growl at your brother man, I fear that there is no hope for you. If you feel that you have all the truth within this mean and petty day of your existence, I am sure that there is no hope for you. If you feel that

this system to which you belong, and to which you are wedded so fast, is going to survive merely because it happens to be a little better than the system from which it sprung, I am ready to weep for your folly. Only through death can we find a gateway to life. Life is not a sordid boon to be given away for the asking. It does not stand for your thought; it stands for the thought that is higher than yours. It stands for a thought higher than has ever been expressed. It stands for a thought higher than will ever be expressed. Does this seem hard? Then be the apostle of an enduring hardness. You owe as much as that to the Spirit which seeks to speak through you. And be assured that you shall in no wise be acquitted of any debt which you owe and fail to pay. You may yet find your highest happiness in paying your debts. I know that is the only way by which you can secure immortality. Odin taught the simple Norsemen all the poetry they knew, and probably all that he himself knew. He should have known more. Had he possessed an infinite capacity for poetry,

his would have been the spirit of life. But the time came when Odin's runes were not sufficient to satisfy the Soul. The hungry sheep looked up and were not fed. And they went to the greener pastures. Be yourself! That is the great lesson of life to learn. But do not fall into the vulgar error of supposing that your self is the self that spoke last night, or last week or last year. If it be you have been in a trance. Speak the last thought which your soul has whispered to you, though it contradict every word you have hitherto uttered. Don't worry over consistency. Remember, as Emerson said, that "a foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds." More than three-fourths of our error comes from the fear of being true to the latest inspiration. Don't imagine because you are forty years old you are bound to believe people who say that because a man is forty years old he can never learn anything more. Make yourself a living exemplar of the fallacy of the claim. No matter what the verdict of the future may be in regard to the merits or demerits of Mr. Gladstone as a

statesman, it will always be spoken in his praise, that as each successive year was added to his age, the bloom of spring was ever budding and blossoming more fully in his heart and brain. You, too, may, if you will, find a springtime that shall be everlasting in your soul, though the snows of many winters are registered upon your head. Believe with Browning that you

"Fall to rise, are baffled to fight better."

A man's ideals are his gods. If a certain man is your ideal, he is your god. Henry Ward Beecher, accepting Jesus of Nazareth as his ideal, showed himself to be more of a philosopher than he is sometimes credited with being when he said: "Jesus Christ is my God, and he is the only God that I know anything about." Yes, if you accept Jesus as your ideal, he is your God: If you accept Buddha, he is your God. And the same holds true with Confucius, Zarathustra, Joseph Smith, Madam Blavatsky or Andrew Jackson Davis. And if you regard money as your ideal, then money is your god. If you regard our present social system as your

ideal, then the present social system is your god. But do not forget that your ideal is sure to disappear some day. Your gods will all have their Ragnarok, their twilight period when they will all perish. I fancy that most of them perish in the lifetime of their early worshippers. Perhaps you will tell me that Jesus and Zarathustra and Confucius and Buddha and Joseph Smith are very much alive still. I will admit that Joseph Smith is, and I could wish that the others were as much alive as he, but they have been so transformed that their most intimate friends would never know them. Do you suppose that the humble carpenter's son of Nazareth would recognize, or that any of his Galilean friends would recognize, the portrait of the theological Christ? Do you suppose that Buddha would find his doctrine in its pristine purity in those prayer mills which are thronged by Buddhists to-day? In one sense I will admit that these great souls are alive. They are alive in much of the newer thought of our time, and they will remain there until we have realized all the truth that

was in them. Then the Soul will perceive them disappearing in the twilight which must sooner or later overtake all the gods of this world or any other through which we pass.

There is nothing more pathetic than the make-believe stage of our existence. We try to feel that we are something useful, when it is more than likely that we are stumbling blocks in the way of progress. We declaim against the men with theories, and pronounce them visionaries. Yet the man with a theory is the only substantial fact of existence. When the theory is accepted and realized as fact you may despise it, but not before. Then the only substantial fact is the man with the new theory. Our outward selves are often satisfied with things as they are, but the Soul is never satisfied; the Supreme is ever commanding us to go up higher. The Soul sees all the divinity in the present hour and day, yet the day is in comparison with what should be small and mean. Ruskin declared that tobacco was one of the greatest curses of the century, because it enabled a young man to be happy without doing any-

thing. I am not sure that there is not much truth in the contention. I must confess, as a user of the weed, that I often feel midst the fumes of the pipe or cigar that I have attained Nirvana. But the Soul can never be content with Nirvana, it must express itself in some way. Why do men so often long for rest? Why do they wish that desire might be blotted out? Is it not due to the feeling that they never properly express themselves? I think so. Nestled somewhere in the heart of Man's being is the conception of a grandeur which we never see in the sordid moments of the earthly day, but which we feel we are native to. Love and friendship, beauty and wisdom, as we know them, seem but the imperfect expressions of some great truth which once filled us with the radiance of a perfect light. We go through the world as mourners, though we know not the cause of our grief. Perhaps we weep when we ought to laugh. I knew one who told me that he dared not go to a funeral, so strong was his inclination to laugh at such times. His inclination may have been right. He was only

a boy, and what has the wisdom of boyhood to do with the foolishness of age? I never read the immortal Ode of Wordsworth, without a renewed sense of the meaning of boyhood.

> "Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
> The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
> Hath had elsewhere its setting,
> And cometh from afar;
> Not in entire forgetfulness,
> And not in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God who is our home:
> Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
> Shades of the prison-house begin to close
> Upon the growing boy,
> But he beholds the light and whence it flows,
> He sees it in his joy;
> The Youth, who daily farther from the east
> Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
> And by the vision splendid
> Is on his way attended;
> At length the Man perceives it die away,
> And fade into the light of common day."

This is the sadness of human life—that our splendid vision fades into the light of

common day. And that is the reason why there must be a twilight of the gods. These gods of our making have sprung from giants perhaps, but the imperfection of the giants remains in them, and if we would preserve the splendid vision of the Soul they must die. There can be no perfection until every element of imperfection has been lost in oblivion. Then God and Man are one, with no line of separation, for Man has become God.

We are ever waging war on the ideals—the gods—that our ancestors have left behind for our worship. They may be Penates, and a feeling of affection for them will preserve them long, but bye and bye the Soul says, "Get out of my house, you have taken up room long enough that should have been reserved for your betters." Homer sings the praise of war in lines which have no equal of their kind, but the Soul is ever saying to men and nations: Put away thy sword, and learn not war any more. Dante reveals his Inferno and Paradiso, but the Soul will not accept monstrosities. Shakespeare gives us the luxurious gorgeousness of the feudal world, but

the Soul pronounces it a tawdry rag. Goethe speaks with a new tongue, but the thousands of newer tongues are beginning to drown his voice. Walt Whitman voices the new democracy, and his voice shall be heard long in the land, yet shall it be hushed in some new, grand chorus of praise in the ages which are to come. Even now the Spirit that was in these men is singing a new song, the first, faint echoes of which we may hear if our ears pause reverently to catch its sound, Ever does the Spirit say, I will sing a new song. And behold, with the new song comes a new heaven and a new earth, and all things are made new. "Why can't they let things alone?" cries some poor old conservative before he takes his after dinner nap. And there is genuine pain in his voice. Ah, our poor conservative friend forgets that old men asked that same question in the days of his boyhood, when he was known as a radical. We would gladly let things alone if we could. But an inevitable necessity pushes us onward, and will not let us do the things that we would, but compels us to do the things

that we can. I doubt not that the sea were it conscious would ask why it was never able to rest! And how typical of Man is the ever moaning sea! As I have stood on the beach watching the waves, or listening to the booming of the surf, I have fancied at times that the sea was becoming conscious, and would yet reveal to me its secret. Often have I singled out some large wave, watching its upward swell, and seeing it sink back at last into the bosom of the great life which gave it all its aspiration. There are times when we can hardly feel that we are more than the waves of the sea, rising for a brief moment to show our crests as they gleam in the radiance of the sun, then to sink back into the bosom of the all in impotent despair. I do not wonder that the Christian apostle, solitary on the isle of Patmos, in his craving for rest in his ideal heaven, found comfort in the thought that there would be no sea there. It would have been too suggestive of eternal action. But it is useless to think of rest. There is no rest for the Soul. Ever must it raise its white crest, even though it be but for a mo-

mentary interval. We should find our highest joy in so doing. Some one will see it, and it may be an inspiration for that soul in some critical moment of its career. Let us join George Eliot in her noble prayer:

"O may I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence: live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
For miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
And with their mild persistence urge man's search
To vaster issues.
This is life to come
Which martyred men have made more glorious
For us who strive to follow.
May I reach
That purest heaven, be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony,
Enkindle generous ardor, feed pure love,
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty,
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
And in diffusion ever more intense!
So shall I join the choir invisible
Whose music is the gladness of the world."

We may make ourselves, if we will, the incarnations of pure divinity. By that I mean we may stand as symbols of divinity. Why should we feel so badly because we know that there are higher symbols, and that we shall be forgotten except by the students of history or literature when the higher symbols appear?

> "All things in their transiency
> But as symbols are meant,"

says Goethe.

You are not saddened by the reflection that the house which you erected for your dwelling will be torn down some day after you are gone, and have no further use for it. You will endure, believe me, as a precious symbol to humanity so long as there is a use for you. And you may always be remembered as a pioneer in the fields of the Soul, and in no way shall you fail of receiving your due meed of praise.

All things seem at times to be lost in a planless maze. Nothing appears substantial. You affirm, and I deny, or I affirm, and you deny. We change places from time to time.

Yet it is impossible for us to hold any opinion long. Later, if we are wise we become catholic. We learn to accept all as truth without exception. We do not seek to discriminate any more. We say that your virtue is good, and so is your neighbor's vice. We stop talking about higher and lower. The words "bad" and "evil" have no place in our vocabulary. We feel that affirmation is good, and denial is equally good. We become all things to all men. We seek not to repel, but to attract. The divine secret is whispered in our ears that opposite assertions can be made with equal truth. We shall hold none of our affirmations long, not because they are untrue, but because we see something else. The new truth includes the old. It also includes what we thought yesterday was our neighbor's error. But because the new truth is new it looms up on the horizon larger, and makes the old statement of truth antiquated. The old truth is ridiculous to-day, because of its leanness. It requires more avoirdupois. Nature does not like the lean and hungry look that some of our truths carry around with them.

She is never weary of reminding us that we have not finished all the courses at her table. Most men eat enough, but they linger too long on the same dish. They are like the Indian chief who ate succotash at a banquet. He liked it so well that, when he was asked after finishing his first plate what he would have next, he replied that he would have a little more succotash, and when he had finished the second he said that he would still have a little more succotash, and so on until he had become so full of succotash that he had no place for the other viands spread before him.

When we relieve our mind of distinctions life becomes more amiable. We become partners with the sun, and let our light shine on the evil and on the good; we become partners with the rain, and our soul scatters refreshing showers on the just and on the unjust. We forget to hate, and when we forget to hate it is wonderful how many other people forget to hate also. Men are naturally imitators, and seek an example. Be one of the right sort, and in a few hundred, or a

thousand years, some one will write a new Imitation of Christ with you for the hero. Perhaps you seek fame of another sort. You would be a military hero. Find your San Juan hill then and storm it. You may pass for a while as a modern Alexander, Cæsar or Napoleon. But I fear that your laurels will soon fade away if you go into business of that sort. Seek virtue, and you will find it everywhere, even in the vices of your friends. I will not say enemies, because if you seek the right kind of virtue your enemies will become your warmest friends. They may not know it for many years, but they will awaken to the fact sometime in the centuries. Let us cease fuming, and believe that our brothers, as well as ourselves, will have all eternity to become good in. Remember that we must all pass through the twilight period. Nothing that is perfect in us can perish. Our half hearted affections may die, but whole hearted ones never.

"What is excellent,
As God lives, is permanent;
Hearts are dust, hearts' loves remain;
Heart's love will meet thee again."

Nothing that was essential to Nature perished when the Norse gods went out in the twilight. We read of no weeping afterwards in the regenerated earth and heaven, such as occurred when the good Balder was killed by the piece of mistletoe that Hoder, unconscious of the evil he was going to do, hurled at him in sport. And Balder, though all Nature wept for him, never returned to life until all the other inferior gods were dead. Desire nothing that cannot stand the test. Whatever stands the test is yours forever. The disciples of Zarathustra have a beautiful belief that all men must some day go through the fire. To the good, the fire also being good, will seem like warm milk, but the evil must endure the pain for three days until the evil is burnt out of them, after which time they, too, will be numbered among the blest.

We are all sailing on the same ocean, though each man is a separate ship. So long as a ship is sea-worthy, it is good, even though it be slow, and destitute of some of the conveniences. Then man your ship, and steer boldly

through the billows, though they rise above your mast.

"If my bark sinks, 'tis to another sea,"

sings Ellery Channing, one of the poets of the old New England Transcendentalism. Be ever on the lookout for land, and you shall sight a thousand ports, all of which are good places to cast anchor, if you remain not too long. If you do your ship will rot. It is best to remain on the ocean most of the time. The air is purer, and full of life-giving ozone.

I have but little faith in the old refrain that "man wants but little here below; nor wants that little long." We want all that we can get. This is the great truth of the materialist, which the idealist is only too prone to forget. "Plain living and high thinking" has a fine sound. But high thinking can go on where cakes and ale abound. An empty stomach, or one half filled, is more likely to bring on a fever than high thinking. The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but the kingdom will not last very long unless the larder is full. Many a genius has written poem or essay on little meat, but one day

he ceased to write, and when the world suddenly roused itself to ask, why? the doctor or coroner said, starvation. Men have toiled in lonely garrets through the storms of winter, but the weakened system could not stand the ravages of pneumonia. I love all prophets of the Soul, but I lose my faith in them when they prescribe a forty days' fast. I care not for the examples of history. History also speaks of lying prophets. And besides, history is a very poor teacher of the Soul. It does very well, as Wendell Phillips suggested, for pedants and day dreamers. The Eternal Now can speak as well on the banks of the Delaware, as ever voice spake on the banks of the Jordan. The pathway to heaven is no narrower in Philadelphia than it was in ancient Jerusalem. It has the appearance of being a little broader, though this some might suggest is due to a laxer condition of things. You need not go to the Orient for Green Pastures or Still Waters. If you do not find them in your own Soul, you will never find them, though you search as long as the decrepit Ponce De Leon searched for the

fountain of youth. Whatever you may need to know or have, you may find within yourself if you really desire to know or have it. "But the social conditions are bad, and I have no power to rectify them," some body grumbles. Yes, you have. You have just as much power to unmake social conditions as anybody ever had to make them. I know that social conditions are bad. At times they depress me very much, and they would always depress me if I thought they were always to endure. But when the Soul of Man awakes to the poverty of our present social system, this system will have its Ragnarok. It is upon the whole the best social system that we have yet known, but in its imperfection lie the seeds which will cause its dissolution.

In the old Norse legend, which I am using as a kind of text, the forces which contended against the gods and caused their destruction are always spoken of as evil. Yet, the very gods whom they fought, and the very things which they destroyed, like the sun, moon and stars, were things which had proceeded from

themselves. The evil giants had to destroy their own work. A fundamental law of Nature is revealed in this old tale. All things destroy themselves, for within all things is an inherent weakness which must eventually bring ruin. This is the reason why nothing, no matter how beautiful, or true, or wise it may appear to us, is safe. We always regret the ruin and devastation, but the inherent weakness in all things brings the avenging force which scatters all. And yet something more soul satisfying always takes the place of that which passes away, and this something passes away that a greater satisfaction may come. It would seem that the Soul was unable to complete its work, but was able to do a little better each time. This is the reason why we should always accept the inevitable cheerfully. I know how hard it is to speak to an aching heart. I know also, believe me, no one knows better, what an aching heart means. But I know as well, that there is nothing wrong with the cosmic process, which is not being but becoming. After every twilight comes the new morning, and the twi-

light is beautiful because it is the prophecy of a new morning.

Everything is true, and everything is false. True to the time and personality, false to the eternity and the personalities that lie ahead. We delude ourselves with time and space. There is nothing real about them; they are only our inferior thoughts. We prostrate ourselves before matter, as though it were some real thing, and not the baseless fabric of a vision. The light of God is ever shining in the celestial firmament, but in our perversity we spread before our eyes the clouds which we have drawn from the misty deeps, and complain that the heavens are dark. We learn that the story taught us in childhood is a myth, and the whole universe becomes a myth. William Tell is a legend, therefore no hero ever existed, We read Strauss, and are convinced that in the tale of the Christ there is but a nucleus of fact, and the world becomes stricken with poverty for no good man ever lived. Ah! brothers there can be no health in us while we live on the plain. We must ascend the mountains for our transfiguration.

We can never understand mountain souls while we live in the valleys. Would you understand Christ or Buddha? Then be Christ or Buddha. You must be God to understand God. We know as much of God as there is of God in us. Knowledge is not something which we absorb from outside; it is the reading of what we find written within ourselves. Schoolmasters may teach us to read, but we must learn our own lessons. We hear of great men, and at much cost and inconvenience we travel to meet them. We may later sing pæans to their names, but we took no more from them than they from us. They were beacons, and lit up the dark places within ourselves, that is all. Illuminators, we all may be. It is our gracious privilege. But he who would be more is a usurper, whose claims cannot be allowed. We want no masters, and the Soul will have none. We can exist in any fashion, but we can live only by the law of absolute freedom. I care not what another man may call right. If it be not right for me, it is not right, though it be written in statute and bible, and sanctioned

by majorities. I will brook no interference. My body you may incarcerate, maim and kill, but the free spirit within me will laugh over its superiority to your whimsicality.

In the popular systems of religion, ethics, and all that men vaunt so highly, I see the things which will bring Nemesis, the Divine Avenger. None of them are built upon a rock. All have a sandy foundation. And the twilight is already beginning to deepen around some of them. Our social system cannot endure long. It has been weighed in the balance and found wanting. The groans of the poor and downtrodden are arising to heaven every day. The offense is rank. Every man and woman whose life has been stunted, refused its full growth, by the system we regard as God-given, has a rock in hand, and when one falls in the right spot this system shall be ground to dust. It is useless to assume an attitude of bravado. The man who does this is only digging his own grave. The morning's news has been getting unpleasant lately. Wars and rumors of wars, and much crime. Armies are power-

less, police are powerless, to cope with the rising tide. Gloom and despondency are the order of the hour. The twentieth century is anticipated with disagreeable foreboding. Why should sane man wonder? There is much in the present condition to invite a comparison between our time and that which preceded the twilight of the gods. First came a winter of great severity, known as Fimbul winter, in which the snow fell from the four corners of the world, while frost and wind were so piercing that the sun imparted no warmth or gladness. This winter was followed by three similar winters, during which war and discord spread over the whole earth. Is not the comparison an apt one? What do we see around us but war and discord in this winter of our discontent, with no sun of York to turn it all into glorious summer? We have chosen our gods, and the tribute they demand of us is a crushing one. They have bound our bodies, and they seek to stifle our souls. They have proclaimed as the only true and infallible gospel, the right of the few to coerce the many, and money, which only a

few can have, as the legitimate goal of all ambition. The meanest men in the world are often the successful men of to-day. Genius is tabooed. Individuality is crushed. The desire of beauty is regarded as a fad, and every mountain side, yea, every naked rock, must have its beauty destroyed for the purpose of gorging this devouring Moloch of commerce. There is no longer room for inspiration. The artist must live, so he prostitutes his art on the altar of greed. The painter and sculptor are not free to paint on the canvas, or chisel out of the marble, forms of imperishable beauty, but they must paint and chisel the stupid features of some monopolist of oil or land. The poet or novelist, moved by some noble, soul-stirring thought, or episode, feels his wings suddenly clipped, and must needs conform to the humor of his masters for the sake of his daily bread. In a spirit of buoyant optimism Tennyson could say in the day of his youth:

"Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay."

But in the evening of his long life, he did not find the fifty years of Europe so pleasing,

and the second Locksley Hall had a very sombre tinge. In the grinding tyranny of our day and generation, many are ready to sigh for the restfulness of that cycle of Cathay. The greed of gold, and the worship of Mammon, are the facts most potent in our time. There is no room for the poet and painter and sculptor to-day. And with the ebbing tide of high resolve and aspiration has gone the desire for the higher drama, and the music which once had the power to raise us above the material to the highest things of the spirit. We desire nothing higher and better than soiled garments and coon songs. We have sold our birthright for a mess of pottage. Among the thoughtful a kind of refined pessimism is weaving its shroud. A mournful dirge seems ever in the air. We need not go to the England of several generations back to hear the weeping of the children. It would appear that Mrs. Browning had visited our manufacturing districts for the facts of her poem. The army of the unemployed, and the still larger army of those whose employment leaves them little better

than slaves, are our standing reproach. Time is fleeting, though art is long. Men question whether life is worth living, or whether anything is worth the doing. With old Omar Khayyam, they say:

> With her the seed of wisdom did I sow,
> And with mine own hands wrought to make it grow.
> And this is all the harvest that I reaped,
> I come like water, and like wind I go.

The individual has no meaning to them. Are there not enough to be had for the asking? I heard a western railroad man say when he was told that a railroad laborer had been run over by a locomotive and killed, "O well, there are plenty more." The laborer is no longer a man. He is hardly a slave even. For a good slave commanded a good price. But the modern laborer when help is plenty is little more than one of those inferior brutes of the mongrel variety whom you may have for the asking. It does not appear worth while to try to find who wrote the fourth gospel when such things are. When we reflect we must all say with Walt Whitman:

> "I feel the measureless shame and humiliation of my race."

We are only the bubbles of Saki. We must endure the sorrow of the night, and dissolve in the morning. They said in old times that joy cometh in the morning. Well, joy does come to some of the poor creatures of the earth when they go out with the dawn. I love an honest man. I love old Omar, because he was honest. Old Omar did not pretend that things were ideal. He did not ask that a priest should bless the then existing order. He knew that the only thing for him was the wine, and he drank it, and his poem if it is read right is worth more to us than all the temperance sermons that were ever preached. The light of our civilization is a light that has failed. It is useless to dig up Jeremy Bentham, or Adam Smith, or any worthy of the Manchester school. They will not help matters at all. Political Economy has been preached long enough. We will preach humanity in the future, and hope for better results. We will not proclaim allegiance to the Prince of Peace and then go forth advocating war. Captain Mahan, lately, in attempting to justify war from a Christian standpoint, calls

attention to the fact that all the prominent opponents of the war, like Herbert Spencer, Frederic Harrison, and John Morley are not Christians. Captain Mahan is right. They are not. But he forgot to add that Jesus of Nazareth was not a Christian either, and he would not be were he living to-day. I say not these things in anger. Anger can produce nothing but anger. I say nothing in hate. Hate can produce nothing but hate. I fear sometimes that hate will be a human, or rather inhuman weapon, too long. If I had the voice of a Jupiter tonans, Jupiter the thunderer, I would speak to many a man who is sitting at ease in his chair, content with his profits, and heeding not the mutterings of the rising storm: Beware, lest through your contempt, or hatred, of humanity, your own house does not fall around your ears. There is an old word in the Hebrew book which says, "I will overturn and overturn till justice be done." Social injustice is doomed. I do not think that it will go down in bloodshed. I would not have much faith in an order rising out of the ruins of civil war. Yet violence

may be the partial means of hastening the result. The wise will inquire into the cause of the violence, and wisdom will order the pressure to be relaxed. The kingdom of God will not come through any sleight of hand performance. The inferior gods will pass away almost before we know they are gone. We may resist the grand march, but we shall be impotent to stay it. When the slogan call of universal emancipation goes forth, the hills and rocks will resound with the echoes of liberty. Craven hearts shall beat their tomtoms in vain. The ark of the new covenant of humanity shall not be carried back a single furlong when once the main army takes the field. Achilles may sulk in his tent, but the battle will go on. The sluggish old brain of King Demos will wake up, and the ichor of divine life flow through his veins. Campanella's line,

"The people is a beast of muddy brain."

shall take its place with many an old truth turned falsehood. The new order will decree that there shall be no rich and no poor. Every one must have enough. The cry of the children must cease. Cutthroat competition

must cease. The barbarities of life must cease. Race prejudice and race hatred must cease. Religious and social persecution must cease. The darkness of ignorance must lose its popularity, and cease. Inequality must cease. The twilight must fall on all of these crudities before we can attain unto the stature of Man. The death of our social gods must occur before we can have the regenerated earth.

I care little for mere words. I am one with Socialists, Communists and Anarchists in their main contention. I know that the rotten old ship of our present social system is going to sink. I know that all our gods are going to die. But let us not forget that any ship, no matter how sound, in which we embark, will rot and sink some day. And our new gods will also pass in time through the twilight. We must learn not to look for any finalities. Let us concentrate our minds on infinite progress. Do not make the mistake of supposing that socialism, or communism, or anarchism is going to cure all the ills which flesh is heir to. There will always be the necessity of

readjustment. No matter what good we secure, there will always be a better. No social state will have the fair proportions of Utopia. It is good for us to live above the clouds. We see clearer when we return to earth. Mother Earth has advantages, too. Longfellow's Excelsior youth was noble, but he perished in the snow. But Antæus never touched the earth without a renewal of his strength. Aristotle is not yet exploded. It still remains true on the average that virtue will be found in the golden mean between two extremes. Do not make the mistake of supposing that all truth is on your side. Learn to value your own words lightly. Care more for the spirit than the letter, for, as Goethe said, "The spirit in which we act is the highest matter." The things that we love most are often the things that we speak about least, and I often think that the finest things are the things that are never said. The deepest feelings of your soul you would not reveal to your nearest friend, unless he stood closer to you than those we commonly call friends usually do. But in those deepest feelings may lie enough

spiritual dynamite to destroy a kingdom or a social system some day.

The secret of progress, as Emerson has put it so well, lies in this: that within every thought lies a higher thought, and within that a thought still higher. This is both the pride and despair of man. From it come Man's discouragements, and likewise his hope of immortality, for what hope would there be if man ever reached maturity as the animals and trees do? The old Norse thought that their gods had to die but once, but many gods are obliged to die again and again. Some of them have learned the strange secret of the resurrection. Within us all are thousands of dead lives which at one time appeared very flourishing. Metempsychosis is no myth. We appear in many strange forms, and assume wonderful disguises. There are times when we are quite invisible to people, though they walk by our side, or sit in the same room with us. Progress is the bete noir with many of us. We like to sit still. But in the world of mind, as in the world of matter, there is no rest. We must move on. We are not allowed to

sink back, even very far. We see some poor outcast who once stood high in social circles, and we think that he has fallen, but it is almost a certainty that he has risen. The man condemned to death, we are usually told by the priest, is ready for heaven, and I have no doubt that if given a fair chance on the earth he would shame most of us. Oscar Wilde was never so worthy of respect and a place in society as when the world gathered its skirts together, lest his touch should contaminate it. His swan song has not been equaled by anything that has been written in English verse for many a year.

> "Alas, for the rarity
> Of Christian charity
> Under the sun."

There are times when it seems as though life were a kind of surgical operation for the extirpation of beauty from the mind of Man. Sometimes, in our hours of languor and weariness, life appears as a worthless metal, whose brightness is only the reflected halo of unripe youth. But in hours of health and

strength, all things are regarded with tranquility, and a sense of profound satisfaction. In our zeal for progress, we long for the twilight periods that the higher periods may not be delayed. We are more than willing to be martyrs for the succeeding generations. We know that society is not moved by the great impulse alone, but by the multitudes of small impulses as well, and that he who does not contribute his impulse is a traitor to his own soul. Men hesitate about advocating ideals, not because they disbelieve in them, but because they know instinctively that ideals are dangerous. Ideals are dangerous, for an ideal is a sun which draws the waters of life into the clouds of wrath, from which they fall in pitiless fury on the sons of men. It is as hard for society to mount, as it is for the ordinary man to climb the Matterhorn. And this leads me to say what I might have said in various places very well before, and have in fact, implied that the twilight of the gods in real life, as distinguished from fiction, is an event going on all the time. Most of the fables of antiquity are true when we make

them universal instead of particular. The battle of Vigrid is fought without intermission. It is an eternal battle, so far as we can judge. Though the gods all perish, there is no lack of warriors, for there is an infinity waiting to be slain. Within this old legend is the profoundest lesson of life, and one which would teach us the only modesty that is worth possessing, namely, to regard nothing as final, and to recognise that all things are destined to achieve some end higher than themselves. This should be the last word of ethics. Perhaps it might do very well for the first word, too. For our present systems of ethics are most assuredly doomed. None of their professors can give any reason why Man should follow the precepts of the schools. None of them know what is right or what is wrong. And the frankest of them admit as much. But there is no bigot to-day like the ethical bigot. He is in every respect as bad as the theological bigot was in his palmy days, and with far less reason, for the theological bigot believed that the fagots which he gathered to burn

the heretic had been put in his way for that purpose, while the probabilities are that the ethical bigot has no very profound belief in God, and may be an atheist. The ethical bigot has no very profound belief in anything except the importance of his own mission to the world, and he is apt to become very disagreeable when you are unable to accept him at his own high estimate. There is no ethical code in the world which is not good, and there is no ethical code which is not bad. Every ethical code was good in the day when it was evolved for the people whom it fitted. It was always bad for the people whom it did not fit, and it is doubly bad for the people whom it does not fit to-day, because of the larger sensitiveness which usually goes with the modern dissenter. Every man is a law unto himself, and to interfere with the working of his own law is to get into a wrong set of relations with him. Men would not be bad, if they were not made so. Every philosopher at heart is an anarchist, not as the vulgar think, through a feeling of hatred for the world, but for the simple and satis-

factory reason that he desires to be able to realize himself. There is no good word in the English language so thoroughly misunderstood as anarchy.

Our ethical systems have sought to make all men alike, though if there be one teaching of Nature that is plain it is that the earth mother loves not uniformity, but takes the greatest pains to secure endless diversity. There are no two objects just alike, not even the leaves on the trees, or the sands on the sea beach. The rainbow was the sign of promise. And in this many colored world we may find a meaning which the ethical teachers have yet to learn. The plumage of the birds is a protest against Quaker drab. A richly endowed man is a protest against any ethical drab. To crush the instincts of the higher man is to leave in the world hideous scars. We strive too much to keep the spirit back on the trodden roads of conventionality, though the ages have given but a stone as a reward for the travel. We might find the stars brighter in some more sequestered spot. "Let a man stand on his own in-

stincts, and the great world will at last come around to him,'' says Emerson. The noblest men in the past have usually lost their heads for trying to stand upon their instincts, and it often, if not generally, means social ostracism to-day. So men seek to learn what their neighbors think, and then parrot-like echo their thoughts. What a contrast between one of these conventional parasites, bowing before some society fetish, and crying to the numskull: ''I agree with you,'' and the great Kepler who could truly say after his years of laborious toil: ''O God, I think thy thoughts after thee!'' Free thought may be perilous, but it is the only kind that satisfies, and it is the only kind that enriches the world. So long as you regard some king or monopolist as the world, your thought and your life will be of little worth, but when the world expands to our imagination, we expand with it. ''The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church,'' so ran the old cry, but I fancy that we might be farther ahead than we are if some of the martyrs could have remained with us. You remember the

story of the king, who, when asked by another king how he got along with the troublesome and discontented members of his kingdom, took him out for a walk, and whenever they came to a flower, or a spear of grass which lifted its head above the rest, struck it down with his walking stick, remarking at the same time, "That is the way I do it." The world has lost its natural leaders through this process. This is the cause of the degeneracy of Spain. We must awaken from our torpor. There is no divine right of individual or king over another. The right of freedom is the only divine right that any individual possesses, ever did possess, or ever will possess. No man, and no body of men, has any commission from the Almighty to govern anybody, no matter what Paul may say to the contrary. Government will exist so long as we are fools, but not one day longer. The wise man has no nook or corner of his brain in which the institution of government fits. Abraham Lincoln said that no man was good enough to govern another. When a man is good enough

to govern another, he will not want to. We shall learn to govern ourselves. We shall break all the stone tables of the law which seek to coerce us. We shall dwell in an atmosphere beyond good and evil.

Our popular religion must make its exit from the stage of our life, as well as the ethical systems and the ideas of coercion. If we had any true religion, we would see what a travesty the popular conception is upon the genuine article. John Wesley once said to a Calvinist, "Your god is my devil," but even the good Wesley thought that Christianity and the belief in witchcraft stood or fell together. Calvin protested against the Church of Rome, but never was the Church of Rome more cruel than the man who burned Servetus at the stake. Our religious gains at times seem hardly worth the counting. Even Theodore Parker, who, according to Dean Stanley, had done more for theological science than any other man of the nineteenth century, was a heretic among the Unitarians to whom he nominally belonged. After his famous sermon on the "Transient and Permanent in

Christianity," only two Unitarian preachers in Boston would fellowship with him. There must needs be a great truth in religion, when we consider all that humanity has patiently suffered for its sake. In speaking against the popular conceptions of religion, I hold no brief for atheism, or agnosticism, as it is commonly understood. I have abandoned many beliefs which I once held, but the years have brought only a deeper religiousness. I have given up the lower beliefs, not in order to be less religious, but in order to be more religious. I no longer believe in the lower because the higher has manifested itself to me. I will not believe in the atonement, because I know that God never needed the shedding of innocent blood to appease a wrath he never possessed. I cannot believe in a future state of rewards and punishments, because I know that if the reward or punishment does not come here and now upon the earth, it will never come. I will not accept the Hebrew scriptures as the only Holy Bible in the world, after Max Müller's painstaking labors. Nor will I accept Jesus as the only prophet of

the Soul, as long as Confucius, and Buddha and Zarathustra are a part of the celestial constellation, or while any century can give birth to an Emerson. Nor shall I repudiate an honest old skeptic like Montaigne, or a good man like Paine or Ingersoll, or a man like Walt Whitman, whose greatness almost defies classifying—it is so cosmic.

Out of eternity is born the new day, and into eternity will it return at night. The day has but little meaning. The meaning of eternity, eternity alone will reveal. Our beliefs are shadows which seem real, because we have no reality with which to compare them. As we look backward, and compare the fancies that were popular in the bygone generations with our own, our beliefs seem real, yet the popular fancies of one or two or five thousand years ago seemed just as real then as do ours to-day. The truth is that the twilight of the gods is an eternal process. No sooner is the new truth discovered than a higher truth rises to slay it. It does not always seem a truth that rises to do battle. More often it appears like one of those wicked

frost giants of the Norseman. In reality, our old truth has become intolerable, and what seem like evil forces rise to strike it down, because behind the apparent evil lies the stronger and higher good. In all our truth lie the seeds of untruth, and the untruth in our truth fights the battle which destroys both itself and antagonist. If we could only escape the admixture of error which is to be found in all our truth, there would be no twilight of the gods. I suppose that there has never been a conflict in the world when the conquered party did not feel that evil had gained the victory. If our capitalist system were overthrown to-morrow, it would appear to the capitalist who has never allowed the light of reason to stream upon him, that the true order of things had been pushed to the wall. I suppose that the poor mouse, whose home was overturned by the plowshare of Robert Burns, thought that the end of the world had come. It could hardly appreciate as we do the poem on the event which touches us in so tender a spot. The dark sod from the plow is not so beautiful as

the green field, but it spells harvest.

Great is the capacity of Man for belief. Great also is the capacity of Man for unbelief. To Leibnitz, this was the best of all possible worlds; to Schopenhauer it was the worst. Man's belief is the product of his character. As a man is, so he thinketh. And as a man thinketh, so it is. Schopenhauer tells us that life is like a cloud travelling over a sunny plain; all before and all behind it is light, but wherever the cloud goes it casts a dark shadow.

Thomas Moore tells us that his

> "only books
> Were woman's looks,
> And folly's all they've taught me."

Byron's lines are familiar to all:

> "Count o'er the joys thine hours have seen,
> Count o'er thy days from anguish free,
> And know, whatever thou hast been,
> 'Tis something better not to be."

Von Hartmann teaches that life, with ever increasing capacity for pain, is the great

blunder of the Unconscious. These men have spoken truth and not lies, for their beliefs flow naturally from their temperaments, but they are not true to the temperaments of another order. We are not confined to the narrow hole of pessimism. In Faust, Goethe makes the Earth-Spirit say of his part in life:

> "In the tides of Life, in Action's storm,
> A fluctuant wave,
> A shuttle free,
> Birth and the Grave,
> An eternal sea,
> A weaving, flowing
> Life, all glowing,
> Thus at Time's humming loom't is my hand prepares
> The garment of Life which the Deity wears!"

If we would be wise, we shall endeavor to be in harmony with the Earth-Spirit. Thus, may we be true to the God within us. Pessimism possesses a truth which those who rejoice in it may have, but it is not an inevitable truth. If one persists in putting his own petty self as the standard of the universe, I

do not see how pessimism can be avoided, for the tides of the universe are no more under the control of the solitary individual than the waves of the sea were under the control of King Canute. We must cease fearing the twilight. Leave the particular, and aim at the universal. I heard one say recently that it was impossible to love all men, as Jesus advised men to do. How did our sceptical friend know? Had he ever tried it? There are some men who profess to love everybody, but when we seek their friends, we find that loving everybody with them meant loving nobody. This is a poor kind of universal. The particular would have been better. Yet, I believe that the lover of divinity will find enough divinity in every man and woman to love them. One does not need to love the hog in them, though I wonder sometimes what can render that animal so unpopular, when there are apparently so many human temples erected in his honor. There must be some strange species of the odium theologicum unrecorded. There is an old song which runs, I believe, somewhat as follows: "I care

for nobody, no, not I, and nobody cares for me.'' The second statement follows irresistibly from the first. The man or woman who cares for nobody will soon find that nobody cares for them. Like begets like.

I have said that the Norse mythology has been represented as a tragedy. All life is a tragedy when looked at from one point of view. But Nature never fails to repair her ravages, as George Elliot has told us in the conclusion of her ''Mill on the Floss.'' Though we may not know the meaning of life, there are hints thrown out here and there which have almost the blessedness of certainties. We can observe a tendency. And this tendency does not appear a small or petty thing. The grand secret of Life would appear to be growth. Man is made to grow. He does not appear smaller, but larger with the generations. With Tennyson,

"I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns."

With Tennyson, also, I believe that there is

> "One God, one law, one element,
> And one far off, divine event
> To which the whole creation moves."

One God. We begin to lose faith in the gods. We begin to see why they are slain from day to day. They are only the milestones on the road to God. We are like the children in that famous crusade of the middle ages, who, ignorant of the geography of the kingdoms through which they were passing, asked, whenever the spires of some new city loomed up in sight, "Is this Jerusalem?" We are always persuaded that we have attained our goal. But the goal is never in sight, and probably never will be in sight. We are the children of the Everlasting Spirit, from whom we came, and to whom we are ever striving to return. But the way is long, and the process is infinite. Many are the fens through which we must pass, lofty are the mountains which we must climb. We are imbued with the belief that it is evening, and time to return to the old home, from which we went out in the morning, and the path is dark.

But it is still morning, and it will ever be morning. We are blinded by excess of light. Even as the bird which wanders at will in the empyrean might ask, where is the light? or as the fish which swims through crystal waters might ask, where is the sea? as Dr. Savage has said in his poem, so are we ever asking for the native element in which we live and move and have our being. God is not a carpenter, who built the universe on the outside, but the eternal substance from which we are made. We are unable to think a thought which is not God's thought, we cannot feel but that the pulse of God beats within our veins. The joy of the world is the joy of God. We can work no evil, though to our limited consciousness we often appear to do so. We are finite, but the armor of infinitude clothes us. We are partial expressions, but each new thought and feeling draws us closer into the universal, and makes us the larger exponents of the All. We die daily that we may enter into Life. We are all ladders stretching from earth to heaven, on which the angels of high purpose and noble mission are constantly

ascending and descending. We are wells of living water from which flows a crystal rivulet of beatitude. Within our souls there is no spot, no stain. We are not the children of wrath, but the children of light. We are not the broken fragments of a once glorious temple, but the building blocks of a spheral unity. In us dwells the fullness of the godhead bodily. We are the revelation of all that has been revealed, and within us shall be found the revelation of all that ever will be revealed.

Within the wildest heterodoxy will be found the basis of the noblest orthodoxy which the world has known. Arianism and Athanasianism are both dead, but over their bodies has sprung a nobler theodicy. From the bleeding feet of heretics there runs a crimson stream, which has washed clean the grimy fabrics of a thousand dispensations. From myriad Golgothas the crosses of victorious martyrdoms gleam in the sunlight of a redeemed humanity. From the heart of Nature no inspiration comes to the world in vain. No Christ ever comes with a larger hope and a new brotherhood to meet with permanent

rejection. The area of freedom is expanding in an ever wider and wider circle, and is destined to encompass the earth.

The gods die. But there is an eternal something which remains. In the old Norse legend, Vidar, the imperishable force of Nature, and Vale, the renewer of the world survive the twilight. Thor perishes, but the sons of Thor, Mode, courage, and Magne, strength, return. And so does Balder, the light. The world and the things that are of the world may perish, but never the forces of the world. This is the meaning of this old legend, which we have been considering here to-night. Even the old Norsemen knew that there was something greater than Odin and Thor, and the rest of their clan. The elder Edda, from which the old stories are derived, knows that there is a higher god, but it does not dare to mention his name. The younger Edda names him once, and calls him the All Father.

We call these old people heathen. But I think that we are ready to admit that even these heathen have not been without a wit-

ness of the light. I fancy that there are missionaries to-day in China, India, and in many other parts of the world who could learn a good many lessons from these people whom we in our ignorance stigmatize as heathen. I am sure that I know not where in their mythology can be found anything more inspiring than some of the stories to be found in the Eddas.

The gods die. The twilight of the gods is a stern reality. We may take that home as a lesson. But let us not fail to take home with us also the lesson that there are some things which can never die. The deeds of courage may perish, but Courage survives. The works of strength may disappear, but Strength remains. The world and the gods will perish in the twilight, but the forces of Nature are seated in an impregnable fortress. Thoughts may die, but Thought shall radiate all the skies. The work of our hands, and the realities of our brains, and the slight materials which we called our home may dissolve like the unsubstantial pageant of Prospero's, but the Soul which was the light of

our life, and the inspirer of all our action, is the imperishable force of Nature, which had no beginning and can know no ending. And this is a reality which needs neither the world nor Valhalla for its dwelling place, and which can never suffer loss from the twilight of the gods. It is He, from whom all things, even our own souls, have come, the one reality of which all other things, even ourselves, are but the shadow symbols, He whom we may venture to call as the younger Edda once does—the All Father.

ERRATA.

Page 17, line 22, read Tithonus for Tithonous.
Page 49, line 2, read war for the war.
Page 68, line 10, read Eliot for Elliot,
Page 70, line 4, read air for light.

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